The LOVE LETTERS of ST. JOHN

BOLTON HALL

Class 244.2 Book H14
General Theological Seminary Library
CHELSEA SQUARE. NEW YORK

PRESENTED BY
Dr. B. S. Easton

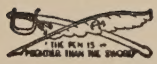
THE LOVE LETTERS OF ST. JOHN

THE LOVE LETTERS OF ST. JOHN

EDITED BY

BOLTON HALL

Author of *Three Acres and Liberty*, etc.



FRANK-MAURICE, INC.
NEW YORK

Copyright, 1926, by
FRANK-MAURICE, INC.

244.2
H14
79437

FOREWORD

Once upon a time I was in a little village in the mountains of northern Tuscany. I had gone there to meditate and to work. In my wanderings through the hills I often met an old priest bound on some visit to distant members of his flock. He usually seemed deep in thought, though when I greeted him he would raise his eyes and give me a smile that was like a benediction, full of peace and love.

One afternoon our ways lay in the same direction and as we neared his cottage he asked me to share his evening meal. We talked far into the night, and that was the beginning of a long and intimate companionship by his fireside.

In all our intercourse he told me nothing of himself. Our talk was chiefly of the things of the Spirit and was of such absorbing

interest—so deeply had he penetrated to the heart of life—that I did not realize until too late that in learning to know the soul of my friend I had forgotten that the story of his outward life might also hold a message of human value. What force had forged the chain of circumstances that had hidden such a man in this meagre mountain village? Where had he acquired his learning and rich culture, his knowledge of the world, his insight into human nature? And what furnace heat of suffering had burned away the alloy of self and left this finest gold—the gold of an overwhelming and unwavering love embracing every living thing? The face of Life has held a deeper significance for me, an added glory, since the lips of that gentle, wise old man taught me to see.

One morning they came hurriedly for me —my friend had received his last summons. As I entered the room where he lay it seemed like the threshold of another world. His face was illumined with a gladness and peace

from within which seemed to fill the simple place with light.

Looking into my eyes as I stood by his bedside he asked me to open a closet by the stone fireplace and bring him a package. It seemed to have lain there many years.

"This holds," he said, as I placed it beside him, and his hand, uncertain in its weakness, touched it with a yet unmistakable affection, even reverence, "this holds some letters that were given me long ago—to give to the world. Take them—and do with them as you will. They teach a great lesson—the one we both know—so well——." There was a long silence, for his strength was failing fast. Then he said:

"I always meant to give them to the world —but the time did not seem ripe. You will know—for the love that is in these is in you —you will understand—you will make it manifest——"

He did not speak again, but with that

peace still in his face we waited together—till he passed beyond. . . .

As I took up the sacred task of transcribing the letters, it was as though my friend had come back to aid me, so clearly were his thoughts and the thought of him interwoven with the teachings I found there. Again awakened an inspiring sense of a noble presence—of strength, purity, a prescience of the infinite power of love—that love which John taught is the whole law for all the worlds, and which, if we but understood it, would bring us into blessedness and peace. For there would seem to be many paths to peace, and "many mansions in my Father's house."

As my work went on, I marvelled to find in it, as it were, the roots of much that has been fruitful of dissension in the centuries since—of much that is familiar to us in current thought. It may be, indeed, that the time is ripe. . . .

It may be that the vision of the truth made flesh that fired the soul of him whom Jesus loved has since become so dimmed by inventions of men, so overlaid with doctrines and dogmas and the silt of human prejudices, that these old letters must now be brought to light to give once more the simple message of "that which was from the beginning," "the perfect love that casteth out all fear."

Or it may be that the letters were written by some unknown hand, or under the influence of some teacher long forgotten. What does it matter? They voice our common need, the Spirit's fruit of human love.

May these voices, long since stilled, wake again some soul to the joy of that peace that passeth understanding, *et tui nomine, O Domine, dant gloriam.*

Bolton Hall

THE LOVE LETTERS OF ST. JOHN

THE SOWING

JOHN, my friend. How wonderful was our morning together—like the first new morning of the world! You have taught me a new beauty in life—taught me, who until that morning believed no beauty new. When you left me I longed for you again—wanted to lie down in your arms like a little child, and rest. And I think that is what I ought to have done if we all lived as we should—if we were of that truth you have told me of, that would make us free.

You fill the great spaces of my life and I thank the gods for that. I thank them daily that they sent me to you, for you have brought blessing into my life. Is it possible

that even in that book of remembrance in your heaven it is written into how many lives your living has brought strength and joy?

The things I am learning from you, my kind, wise friend, seem not so strange to me now. They come more gently, as it were. At first they were like a stream of water from some high, unseen fountain. Now they come sweet and warm and living like the flow of milk from the breast, and I draw it in and am strong. And I am also glad.

When you come again there is somewhat I must tell you of my life before I knew you. Will you then love me less, my friend? Will I seem to you a different woman from the one you know now?

May the gods bless you and yours. I long to know of somewhat I might do for those who are dear to you. I love them all —all your dearest, even Anna, and all your friends, and I would fain serve them with my love.

ANTIONE.

IF I could love you less, Antione, because of anything you had done, then am I one who loved you little. Tell me all your heart desires to tell me. In love as well as in truth we are always free.

To me Eternal Life and the love of the Father have been manifested in the flesh. I have heard, I have seen, I have handled with my hands, and what I have told you is what I know, that you may know that you have my love, for the love that I have for you, Antione, is truly of the Father.

The pure in heart see God in every man. In whatsoever face they look they see the eyes of Christ. He said: "Whoso loveth much, to him is much forgiven." There is no fear in love. One day when he was teaching in the temple the scribes and Pharisees brought to him a woman taken in adultery, but they could not persuade him of

any sin in her. More than one of them told him of her deeds and repeated to him the law of Moses and the way of the fathers with such an one. Yet he but looked at them sorrowfully. At the woman who knelt near him, weeping, he did not in anywise look. And while we waited nearby and they grew vehement because he said no word, he stooped down and wrote with his finger in the sand. And this is what he wrote:

"Of old time the Sons of God went in unto the daughters of men. Even so now. Only the Soul that requireth the things of this world is an adulterous soul, and is already condemned.

"What shall it profit a man if he gain all things and all power, if he lose his love for man? In every man desire lies asleep. And God is in every man both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

"Judge not, therefore, lest you condemn God in condemning men. The sins of men are also in the plan of God.

"God reads the heart."

And beginning with the eldest, they went out one by one.

Those are hidden sayings. We cannot hear them now, but the Holy Spirit that shall come into the world shall teach us all things and shall bear witness to them.

They are pure, Antione, whose eye is single, who have one simple will; that is to say, all they are pure who are loving. If our soul sees only lovingness our whole body shall be full of light so we shall shine with the light of the knowledge of the glory of Love in the face of Jesus Christ. Love is agreement because it is unity. Paul says that though one give his body to be burned yet has not love, his sacrifice is nothing and he is become as a rattling cymbal and jarring brass. Whoso has looked into the face of the Christ knows of a surety the love that is from everlasting with the Father. I love you, Antione.

YOUR wonderful letter, John! I want that love you tell me of, that leaves no room for fear. I need it—I need you to teach it to me. I long for you, my friend. I long to see your face. I fear I shall begin to hate those Christians who fill your thoughts and all your days, and keep you from me.

I follow you everywhere, in my heart. As I sit here to-night, writing this, I long to know where you are and what are your labors. Are you speaking to a great crowd in some market place to persuade them to the standard of Jesus? Or are you gathered in a place apart with a few who also knew him, talking of the days when you walked together in Galilee? Or are you alone, my dear, dear friend, alone and weary and haply with naught wherewith to satisfy your hunger and nowhere to lay your head? It

tears my heart to think of your ofttimes loneliness and need, your hurried journeys, your wanderings in rough places, the mobs and disorders of those Jews! My dear, dear friend, do you know what it would mean to me if any evil should befall you? But I must not trouble you with my fears, I must not add to your burdens. I will try to be happy as you bid me, happy in your love, my wonderful friend, as you are happy in the love of your god.

To-day I went with Xenia to listen to the Grand chorus which is part of the festival to our god Dionysus—a thousand voices in harmony with the ring of cymbals in pæan after pæan of joy rose to the blue sky; the fragrance of flowers filled the warm air and garlands of flowers, like rainbows, spanned the sunlit, tree-arched distances. Through it all your name sang in my heart; like a cord of gold the thought of you linked all the light and color in feast before my eyes. Then out of the melodies of sound far and

near, a voice, divinely sweet, seemed to whisper to me "What joy hast thou, Earthborn, to lay upon this altar of my day?" And my heart sang in answer: "The love that John has waked in my soul is the greatest joy my life has ever known."

And it seemed, dear one, that in that moment I laid my love for you in the hand of the great world god, and that my god and your god were the same.

ANTIONE.

YOU will be glad, Antione, to know that your dear letter gave me much joy. Your God and my God indeed are one, for only by the power of the Holy Spirit, which is the indwelling love, can any be born either in the Spirit or in the flesh. Jesus said that God is love and love is God and there is naught but love. And there is no other name than love, Antione, given under heaven or among men, whereby we may be saved.

Beloved, it is possible to the soul to be happy in any condition. If we be not happy, then are we striving to do what God has not given us to do—to bring to pass that for which the time is not yet ripe and we are grieved when our striving fails. But we, and haply those whom we would serve, would be yet more greatly grieved had it not failed. For God's thoughts are not as our

thoughts and the love of God makes reckonings of that of which we can not know.

Be glad for me, Antione, for my work prospers, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me. I am not distressed either in body or in mind except, haply, as I feel your fears for me. Do not grieve me thus, Antione. I would have you always with that smile in your eyes and the sun in your hair as I saw you last. For it rejoices me to think of you so. What if I die? It might even be that thus I would be nearer you and would never leave you. Death is naught, but as a step to be taken joyfully in its time as our steps upon the grass at the sound of song.

Nor am I distant from you, Beloved. I am with you when you do not dream it. And I will be with you yet again and more nearly, that the knowledge of my presence may never thereafter leave you.

Philip's little boy is at play near me and has asked of me why I looked up at the light so long a time. I told him I was thinking

of what more I would write and he said: 'I think you might write a kiss.' I greatly love this little son of Philip.

JOHN.

I HAVE carried your letter on my heart, John, my wonderful friend, my Well of Refreshment! It has lain there like a thing alive, a warm, glowing thing throbbing with the thoughts of your heart. Almost I think I know the meaning of that love of yours in which there is no fear. I am no longer afraid to tell you of my life. I will not wait for your coming but will tell you now by letter, so that when you come to me again you may already know all.

I was an only child—my mother died of my birth—and my father, who was a man of wealth and highly esteemed for his wisdom and ability in public affairs, became devoted to the philosopher Arules and at length persuaded him to come and live in our home with the understanding that he would occasionally give me instruction. I was about fifteen at the time.

My childhood had been a lonely one, being greatly circumscribed, as is the custom of our people. I longed constantly for those to whom I might talk, of whom I might ask questions—I longed to hear, to see, to understand. I had carried the mystic box in procession and had ground cakes in company with other young girls for our patron goddess, but these were almost the only occasions on which I had been allowed to go beyond the walls of my father's house. My father was very kind but he was much concerned with public matters and had neither time nor inclination to attend upon me. He had great confidence in his slaves and in my old nurse who had been with me since my birth, and he considered that through them all reasonable requirements were provided for me.

It was adjudged a daring innovation when it became known among his friends that he intended to have me instructed by a philosopher.

Hardly had a year passed before I learned to love Arules. Our lives had gradually become so intimately entwined that I knew not at the time how great a part of my own life his had become. I remember that as I passed his chamber I would touch lovingly the latch of the door his hand had touched; his papers, his garments, his favorite seat in the court, every thing associated with him became almost sacred to me, as a part of his dear self.

He taught me that the purpose of life is growth. The union of souls, he said, should raise us to higher things. Marriage must not be considered merely as an escape from loneliness and limitations by the one and the acquisition of a constant ministrant to material needs by the other. It should be entered not as a remedy for poverty of soul, but in conscious strength and joy and lavishness of life. He held that neither state nor priest had any right to sanction or to forbid the union of two souls. More especially

was it unreasonable, even hypocritical, for one who did not subscribe to tenets of state or priesthood to allow the supervision of either. And he insisted that two persons should live together only as long as they loved each other.

His deep learning, the calm sureness of his convictions fascinated me. We talked frequently on the subject in the absence of my nurse and considered the matter from every aspect. He was kind and patient with my fears. I was indeed very fearful, for you know that the feeling of our people is strong against any laxness among women, and toward one who has been known to transgress custom almost any insult or indignity short of bodily injury is allowed. I knew that my father's position would render even a slight transgression of convention doubly heinous in the eyes of all who knew me, for you know it is a saying with our people that the woman most to be commended is she of whom least is said, either good or bad.

Arules was entirely willing to acknowledge our union among our friends or at a meeting of friends gathered together for that purpose; but he would not, even for my sake, violate his principles by submitting to convention for convention's sake. He would willingly wait until I might arrive at his point of view and he made it a point of honor that we should not live together until I was fully convinced of the righteousness of the action.

It was just at this time, when I was divided thus between my passionate love for Arules and my fear of the certain censure and ostracism of all about me, that my father was thrown from a chariot and so seriously injured that any excitement or shock might have proved fatal. And shortly after weighty matters entailed by the responsibility of a family estate required Arules' immediate presence in Corinth for an indefinite time. So I at last consented to a secret union until

such time as my father should be strong enough to hear of it.

Scarcely a week after my lover's departure my father died suddenly, and before a month had passed I received word that Arules had been stricken with the plague. I flew to Corinth—to find him dead!

My agony was too great for tears. For a time Euneo, my good old nurse who had travelled with me, even despaired of my regaining my reason. In my desolation, after I at length began to pick up the threads of my life, my one comfort was that I was to become a mother. Yet I was in a strange city, without friends, my condition a badge of shame. I shrank from every one, but never for an instant did I regret loving Arules. I was not able to make the journey to Athens so I awaited my time at Corinth.

From the moment of her birth my little one has been to me a joy and consolation and the source of my greatest strength. When she was seven years old I returned to Athens

with her and took up my abode again in my father's house. I was wealthy and I deliberately rejected the narrow life of women of my class, and at length my freedom of life was such that I came to be classed with the hetaerae.[1]

[1] Hetaera: A female friend; later one of the assertors of women's right to education and culture, whose lives were often above reproach, and of whom Aspasia is the type. The Greeks, generally speaking, looked upon marriage merely as a means of producing citizens for the state, the education of women being almost neglected. Even private hetaerae were not mere prostitutes, but acted as flute or cithara players, and as dancers, and were, as such, frequently engaged to add to the splendor of family sacrifices, or to enliven or heighten the pleasure of men at their symposia. Most of these hetaerae not only took the greatest care to preserve their beauty and to acquire accomplishments, but they paid considerable attention to the cultivation of their minds. The Arcadian Lastneneia was a disciple of Plato and Leontion was a disciple of Epicurus.

It is even said of Aspasia that she instructed Socrates and Pericles. Whatever we may think of the historical truth of these and similar reports, they are of importance to the historian, inasmuch as they show in what light these hetaerae were looked upon by the ancients. It seems to have been especially owing to their superiority in intellectual cultivation over the female citizens that men preferred their society and conversation to that of citizens and wives; and that some hetaerae, such as Aspasia, Lais, Phryne, formed connections with the most eminent men of their age and

My greatest desire has been to advance the independence and education of women in Athens and that Xenia may have a full and free and noble life. To this end I have allowed her to be my constant companion and to meet all my friends. She is worthy of all the liberty I can bestow upon her. Weakness is not her heritage. I look into the clear eyes of my precious little one and I read there the strength and courage of a fearless woman heart. I want her to be free to love the man who can wake the noblest love of her soul, and to choose the father of her child. I have offered up the sacrifice of my suffering in the cause of the freedom of women as you have dedicated your life to the truth that Jesus taught.

It has been said that Arules deceived me. My contradiction is the life I have since led

acquired considerable influence over their contemporaries. Women, however, of the intellect and character of Aspasia were exceptions—even Athenian citizens did not scruple to introduce their wives and daughters to her circles that they might learn there the secret by which they might gain and preserve the affection of their husbands.

—intellectual Athens knows what it has been. But even if he did, what then? The depth of experience I have sounded, the difficulties I have encountered, the criticism, the contumely, have but strengthened my soul and cleared my vision.

You may already from unfriendly lips have heard somewhat of my story. I have now told it to you, freely and without reserve. If you now no longer care to see me—if I have seen you for the last time, then—Oh, I dare not think of it! But whatever your judgment may be, I know, dear friend, that it will be just and there will be at least the joy of an unquenchable love for you throughout such life as the gods have allotted to me. To let you go would be terrible, but it would be impossible to live a life of deceit before your eyes.

I HAVE kept your letter by me for a day and a night, Antione, that I might read it at a more quiet time. And now the time is lacking to write you before the messenger must depart who will bear this to you, with other letters and salutations to those over whom my heart yearns, for they are but as little children in knowledge, and because of the strange teachings that have of late been brought to their ears many have been offended and are, as it were, without a home. Jesus' teaching was only "That ye love." If we love we are one with him; if we love not we have no part in him.

It behooves us who have known him face to face to comfort those who are weak, for the time seems near when many will fall away because of persecutions. Those in Jerusalem are fleeing to Pella. I have word of Paul in chains and in sore straits. Of

Onesimus I know not, nor of Peter. On a certain day Peter said to me: "The future is coming down on us with so great swiftness I care not what Cæsar may do." All look to him as to a father, and the courage and fire of his love have burned out the fear of many who faltered. I trust indeed that Peter may be kept in safety for the upbuilding of the church. Yet the Father knows best what tool to keep and what to lay aside.

The messenger waits. Farewell, Antione.

DEAREST always, I have read your letter many times. And I seem to have lived many years since I read it first. I know now that you have never loved me. I laid my life and my heart bare before you. If you had ever loved me you would at such a time have given me assurance of it—some word to stay my confidence and heal my hurt.

You have dedicated your life to those Christians and have little care for any others in need. I thought your love was wide and all-embracing. I thought that even if you did not love me greatly, you did indeed care for me truly. And yet, when now I have told you of my life, you are cold to me and show plainly that you have no real care for any but those Christians. Even such as but call themselves by that name, though you

know them faint-hearted and pitiably weak, are more dear to you than I who have laid at your feet the innermost confidence of my life and the treasure of my very soul.

You have never loved me and my love for you might as well have been poured upon the sand of the desert. I turned from marriage with a man who loved me, to you, a man who did not love me. Of my love for you, long before I ever talked with you, even from that first day that I saw you with the wood-gatherers beyond the city, I have told you. And you have been first—you have been alone—in my heart since that day. Yet it is as nothing to you! Until I told you in words, you did not even know that I loved you! You have said that you love me, but you did not mean it. You do not even know what love means. You have deceived yourself but I will not be deceived, I will face this thing in my own heart and with you. I am no coward. I see now plainly that you have never loved me. For in my need, when

I have reached out to you without reserve and trusted you with my all, you have no word for me but of some disturbance at Jerusalem! What is that to me? Or of those who teach false doctrines and are weak and fearful—what have I to do with such as these? To them you write many letters, to them you give love without stint. For me you have nothing.

You have joyed in my beauty perhaps. I know that I am beautiful. I know that I am unusual, intense; with great capacity for suffering as for loving—capacities that your nature is too cold to comprehend. And you have watched me, perchance, as might some philosopher an animal at the sacrifices, or the pantomime of one of an alien people. You have found interest in the mere spectacle of my living—perhaps you have even been somewhat flattered by my love for you, the while I have been as one writhing under the knife of torture!

And I have loved you so! With a love

that illumined and transformed all my nature, so that I longed to give all and would ask nothing. Such love is a consecration, whether it last for a day or for a lifetime. But it can not be that you have ever known such love. You are cold. You are remote, and not to be touched with any feeling for my pain.

I have no heart to write more. I am as one for whom all joy of life has been blotted out.

A.

I FORGET all my pride and my pain, dear friend, in the fear that some evil may have befallen you. It is now a month and seven days since I sent my letter to you and there is yet no word from you. Philip also has been here and has no report of you. And there are other friends who wait anxiously for some news of your work and your welfare. Can you not send us but a word, that we may rest in the assurance that all is well with you?

ANTIONE.

IT is now two months and a day, my dear, dear friend, since I who love you have heard of how you fare or even where you are.

I suffer in my need for some news of you, John. No hour since your last letter to me first lay open in my hands has been free from pain—it is as if I had sounded every note in the whole gamut of human suffering—but now my anxiety for your welfare, your safety, has swallowed up all else and I long for nothing as I do to have some word from you.

I send these letters to you by whatever merchant or traveller I hear may be journeying toward Pergamos but I do not know whether they will ever find you or whether you are not even now in some distant place. If I have no word from you shortly at least through some of your friends, I will send a

letter by the most trusted of the slaves my father gave me. I can not bear this longer; I must know somewhat of you, John, for oh, my wonderful friend and teacher, I love you, love you, and it matters no longer to me whether you love me or not. I can not live without you and this great wall of silence between us is breaking my heart. I have no longer any pride, I have nothing, I know nothing, but that I love thee, thou wonderful Thought, that I have no longer any life apart from my love for thee!

ANTIONE.

The occasional use of *Thee* and *Thou* possibly points to a transition of these letters through some other language.—ED.

ANTIONE, Antione, how could you so distrust me? Did I not tell you even beforehand that no word or deed of yours could change my love for you? Then when your long letter came, telling me of your early life, what more was there that I could say to you? It was as nothing—where you lived with Arules, or how, if you but loved him. Perhaps I might have said this again in my letter to you—yet to what purpose, since you did surely know it and did also know that there is no law but love? Why should we waste words, Beloved, upon that which is past and has value only as it has a measure of love, and, to that measure, is understood already of me and of you, and is justified and perfect before him who so loved us that he sent his only begotten son that we may know that he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him.

Antione, whoso has looked in the Divine Face knows this surely, that God is love and every one that loves is born of God. You are strong because you can love greatly, and you have therefore less need of me than those who love but little and hence are faint-hearted and full of fear. I write unto them lest they fall by the way and attain not unto the joy of fellowship with the Father. Would you that I leave them to perish because they are weak? Jesus did not so. It is to these least among his brethren that my love goes out as would yours to any who looked to you for succor.

You are strong, Antione, and I have faith in your strength, because I have faith in your love. The time of my return is near at hand and I will see you shortly.

JOHN.

JOHN, John, almost you persuade me that this love of which you tell me that it casts out all fear—is more to be desired than all things else beside. Your letter brought such comfort to my heart, and joy unspeakable that I am to see you. I feel that I must come to you, wherever you may be, thou more than lover and brother and friend to me, if thou dost not speedily come to me!

A.

SINCE that wonderful hour when, in thine arms, John, my beloved, I gave myself to the luxury of giving, thou hast filled me with love for all the world. My heart can not hold such a flood of ecstasy—it must overflow to all that touch my life. My only desire is for greater capacity to love the dearest of all on the earth! My one sorrow is that even in giving you all, I have yet so little to give you.

I know that you do not love me as I love you, but this troubles me no longer. You do indeed love me but with a love that is different, strange, unlike that of any man I ever knew. But I would rather have this love of my Beloved, than that of all the world of men beside.

You satisfy the highest outreach and yearning of my soul, you answer the hum-

blest need of my nature, you fill my whole being. My love for you, dear one, is as an ever lengthening change of sweet equalities, an endless chain of sweeter contradictions. It is a mystery that envelopes me, a mystic light that penetrates to the innermost secrets of my soul. It is to know that if I spent with you my mortal and immortal lives I could never be satiated, yet that the bliss of one hour with you would glorify eternity.

In my love for thee to-day, thou Soul of Love, the gods themselves must know an added joy, and the sun a new radiance! Long ago you wrote me that you would one day be with me in such wise that the knowledge of your presence would never thereafter leave me. And now it is even so. The "Dear Presence" is what I name to myself the embrace of your soul in your absence—a closer, sweeter embrace than I knew even when with you face to face. The air about me is instinct with your spirit, and my spirit becomes radiant, vibrating at the touch of

your wonderful vitality. I forget my loneliness and longing for you—all the pain and weariness of other years; I feel again the throbbing of your great heart upon my heart. I drink my fill of my well of refreshment and lose all the littleness of my separate life in the greatness, the joy of the Dear Presence that lies constantly close to my soul.

I lived a long life, a new life, in those hours I spent with you. And the dear things you said to me—deep things and wonderful, sweet things and tender—come back to me now and again like a fragrance. Those precious moments with you, dear heart, were like a string of pearls about my forehead, around my breasts, a girdle encircling my waist, and yet all too short! I would have lavish ropes of them to bind me everywhere about and sweep the hem of my garment!

I am like one who having had a wonderful dream or vision that has changed in some subtle way all the values and relations of life

and made the whole world new, yet lacks the full interpretation of it and desires above all things to learn the perfect, hidden meaning it may hold. For what you did show me of your love was a vision and a revelation to me —you revealed me to myself and shared with me somewhat of your own radiant spirit.

I had heard of you in the beginning from those who listened to you speaking in the market places and in the courts, as a wild dreamer and iconoclast; from others as a man of such mild speech that those who listened thought you mocked them as being but children before you. But when I heard you for myself, then I knew. My spirit in that instant knew in yours its creator! Your gentleness and childlikeness woke again in me the little child that lives forever at the heart of even the most earth-worn of us, your force and fire found their way to the very roots of my being. It was as though I had been seeking you all my life. And now that I have found you at last, oh dearer than life

to me, I can never more lose you! For it is not your love for me but mine for you that will bind you closer than breath to my being forever!

O, I could write my heart out thus to you endlessly—the Dear Presence seems nearer as I write! But I must weary you with my song of love, love, only love. Tell me, Beloved, could my loving ever weary you? Would you that I should hide my joy of you in my own heart only? You who are so pitiful to all who reach out to you in their need—it is a deep need of mine to tell you of my love—be patient with my longing for you, let me be one of the little children of your love.

ANTIONE.

ANTIONE, my Heart! Who am I that you should bring to me such treasure of your love? Your love, nor the song of your love, can never weary me. I rejoice to know that you can love so greatly. Loving is the beginning of wisdom and the fulfillment and bringing to an end of law. We understand nothing except in so much as we love, because by love does the mind of God enter into the minds of men.

Yet is love one thing and the one beloved somewhat other, and we must keep ourselves from idols. But if we love the more greatly and not the more narrowly, when we look into the eyes of our beloved, our idol, then let us look until we see there even the eyes of Christ. For he said that where even two are joined together in the name of love, there he abides also to work his good pleasure with

them and among men, for wherever there is a soul that loves,where two are joined together, there also the Father appears to us, and there is the habitation of God.

The narrow love, that which desires in return love for the self, which considers self and the things of self and them that minister to the self more than it considers any others, this love brings but pain and leaves the soul without content. But when the vision comes, and that larger truth that makes free the soul, we care not for ourselves nor those near to us in kin or in affection more than for any other that has need, and we then have done with disquiet and with grief. It is this larger love that leads unto the peace of God which passes understanding and this is a peace which the world of material things can neither give nor take away.

The time will come, Antione, that the dear love you now give to me you will give in like measure to all the world. That is the greatest blessing and the deepest joy, and

therefore I wish it for you, and therein I wish for you, Beloved One, that perfect peace of God.

JOHN.

LIFE of my life! I know no name more fitting by which to salute you, dearest!

Can it indeed be that I will ever love any other on the earth as I now love you, John? You are very wise, dear heart, but I think in this you have somewhat erred. Yet let it be so—only I know that I can never love you less!

You are like glistening snow on a mountain top, in the dazzling beauty of your spirit, in your aloofness, in the calm, poised, impersonal strength of your attitude toward this love that sways and lashes my whole being into white-hot life. My life to-day seems one passion of desire that craves from you an answering life of burning kisses—an ecstacy that longs ceaselessly, achingly, for the uttermost communion.

You do not feel this. I know that you do not. Yet you seem to have some still more

wonderful joy that includes and transcends mine. I know well now why the master you love so loyally, loved you above all others. You are filled to overflowing and lifted up with love to draw all hearts to you! It may be that some day you will see into heaven and tell us of the love made perfect there—I can imagine you far away in some lonely isle, lost in the beauty of your vision!

But perhaps, if a vision of perfect love became permanent it might cause one to lose one's balance for this world—as the Latin has it, *ex statio*—a standing out and above all things we know as fixed. You know Eros drove Psyche with the gadfly of desire—but you will say that is because her love was limited to one. Could you ever have known, I wonder, that love that is such terrible pain to a woman—that aches, famishedly, for union with the one she loves? Could any woman ever grow to realize that impersonal, super-personal love of yours that draws me to you irresistibly, that com-

forts and calms me unspeakably, and yet is my despair!

Yet I am happier in love with a zealot fighting to vindicate his strange beliefs than I should be as the wife of Xanthus, the writer of words, words, words, immortal as his words have made him. Every drop of your blood is Jewish; I am Greek in every fibre of my being; yet I rejoice in your work, your spirit, your ideals, even when I do not quite comprehend them. It is as if my love for you melted the difficulties and shone upon the dark places and brought us even nearer than abstract understanding ever could. So complete is my trust in you that even if I saw you do what is evil it would be impossible for me to believe my own eyes. I often wonder how it is that any can resist you—how it can be possible that even one in a crowd of people that listens to your voice—can yet lift up his voice against you. Such an one must indeed be possessed of a devil! You have so swayed my life and brought my

whole being under your power—and I am no weakling—it seems that even though you preach such a new, strange truth, none could long withstand you.

Oh, my wonderful Love, teach me always! Teach me more fully, more deeply—it is not that I would draw you down to me, but that I would rise to you! At all cost I must be yet nearer to you!

ANTIONE.

YOU shall indeed be nearer to me, Antione, dear love; you will grow ever closer with the growing of your love; you will be closest to me when your love is greatest.

Those who do not love enough to understand are not therefore possessed of devils—they are only still as little children in the truth and hence to be loved the more. And yet even devils are not to go unloved. They also serve. I did not always know this. When Jesus cast the seven devils out of the Magdalene I prayed him to send them speedily to their own place of torment but he said, "Think you that these devils are not also under authority? The Father hath need of them in this world and when their work is well finished he will take them unto himself." There is no place in this world

or in any other, Antione, where love is not at home.

I would not have you name the truth of Jesus a new, strange truth, Beloved, for it is not new, but has been from the beginning. By it were the worlds fashioned, and without it was not anything made that was made. For the truth of Jesus, the Word that he spake unto us, the God that he showed and declared unto us, is only Love. There is no other power and this only is the life of every living thing. It is the Word that was made flesh and dwelt among us. It is the bread of life, the only door into the Sheepfold, the only rock on which to build, the only way of salvation for the world.

One eventide, when we had come with him to the hills above Bethany, we were weary, for we had come by the ford of Bethabara, a long journey, and it was yet far to the home of Mary. We had with us a little bread and he would that we rest there for the night and on the morrow go down into the

town. And after we had eaten he tarried yet with us, speaking of that which had been by the way, and of one who had disputed with him that only by searching into the hidden things of the law can men become acceptable unto God, and by striving in sacrifices and in worship, attain to him.

And he said, "A certain king builded a temple in a marsh, and because the stones of it were great they sank into the mire and the temple fell, and with it were the workmen also swallowed up. And again the king builded upon the ruins thereof, and this temple also sank and the mire was raised up over all that place. When the king therefore saw that the last state was worse than the first, he cast into the marshy place a living seed and the seed grew and became a great tree so that the whole place was dried up by reason of the roots of the tree; and under its shadow, behold there was the new temple of God."

And one of the twelve asked him of the

parable and he answered: "The marsh is the wickedness of the world, which is division and hatred and all uncharitableness, and the stones of the temple are sacrifices and gifts, but the seed is love and from it groweth the kingdom of God. Verily, I say unto you that this seed when it springeth up to heaven shall bring forth a new earth, meet for righteousness."

Antione, it is with this love that I labor. It is because I know and am assured that naught can stand before the coming of the Lord Jesus, who is the love of God made flesh, that I preach this truth. If we say we love God and love not men, we lie. We can not know the love of God except we know the love of man. For this reason was the Word, which is love, made flesh, that he might be even as other men dwelling amongst us.

I speak to you of that which is in my heart, Antione, because it is a joy to me that you

find so great treasure in loving, for even in like measure must your whole life be enlarged.

JOHN.

THE growing vision of thy love, John, my Star and my Sun, melts all the hardness and pride of my nature. It enlarges my horizon and enriches every perception. It makes every happiness, even the least, seem as a fragrant rainbowed joy, new-born from the dawn of the gods. My heart can not hold so much, but floods run over the brim!

Until I knew this deepest love for you I think I never saw the depth of sadness in the eyes of those who pass in the streets, for not all the suffering I had fathomed had given me such insight into human hearts, into the wilderness of mortal pain, as has your love —and my love for you!

I never found such sheer delight in the sunlight and shadow flecking Xenia's hair, as she sits there now in the court with Pas-

iclea, spinning. And this tall white lily in its slender vase on the table beside me—even its beauty seems to share somewhat of the radiance of the Dear Presence that enfolds me as I write.

When I gathered my flowers this morning before the sun had touched the dial, this perfect blossom suddenly unfolded itself to me as I stood near it. It gave me such joy! I held it to my heart and loved it. Almost it seemed to speak to me and look into my eyes.

Last night a flute player passed near, along the street called Hestia, playing softly in the moonlight and now and again pausing to sing the words—a song I knew in my childhood. At length he stopped under my window and the words came clearly to me as I sat by the fountain in the court. And they seemed to span the years—to thread the years of days that lie between that yesterday and this to-day, as pearls are strung upon a silken strand—and it seemed to me in that moment that all of my life had been

but as a path that led me to you, a preparation for you, a making ready as a chalice is shaped and graven for a special use—for the wine of your Olympian gift!

And suddenly I was glad again, *glad* for everything, even the pain; it has all been as fuel to feed the quenchless fire of my love for you! You would say, rather, it has but made me a fitter instrument for the service of others and that this is the true goal. It may be that you are right. I do not know. I only know I love thee, love thee with my whole being, O thou who art blessed with the breath of the gods!

Somewhat you have shared with me your abiding realization of a god all lovingkindness, who sorrows in our sorrow and allows pain only because we could not have feeling and experience without it. Hitherto the saying of the cynics—"Zeus and Fate, to whom mankind are equally dear"—has been constantly on my lips. But you are so filled, as it were, with the knowledge of your god

that those who are near to you must, perforce, know something of him, and those who love you learn unconsciously to love him in you.

Often when I ask you questions your spoken answer does not satisfy me fully, but later—alone with the Dear Presence—the deeper meaning comes to me. And frequently your own words come back to me—after intervening days of distracting activity and the blurring confusion of many influences about me—like the first strong lines of some overwritten scroll, indelible beneath the surface scrawls.

Sometimes I think my days are far too full—I have no time in which to know myself, no room in which to grow. I have drawn to me in earlier years many persons and influences that of late I seem to have outgrown. In the light of the vision you have given me, much that I thought of advantage to me and to be desired, now appears inconsiderable, even cumbersome. And the

dust of the skeleton of yesterday clogs the nostrils of to-day's new being. So many of my days now seem to me little more than a maelstrom of petty, useless doings. I would measure my living now by the new standard you have shown me, yet I do not know how to begin.

Do you understand how I feel about this? Can you tell me what to do? You always understand me. I am always absolutely myself when I am with you. More than any man I have ever known, you seem to see into the hearts of women. Can it be that you were indeed a woman in some incarnation?

Come to me again, come to me, O thou light that shines upon the throne of the gods! that I may grow like unto thee, and, even as the flowers in the sunlight, may unfold in the joy of thy presence!

ANTIONE.

YOUR letter gave me joy, Antione. It brought a vision of you to me—your bright hair, the lily beside you, the sunlight, the fountain, Xenia and the other children. Your home is to me also a home, Antione. It has been great happiness to me. Yet it has no less been a joy to me that, even as Jesus, I likewise have not had where to lay my head and have slept, even as he did, beneath the stars, by the wayside, on the mountain-top, in the desert.

One day at even, as we sat near the bank of a little stream where we had stopped to quench our thirst, he took in his hand a lily and spake to us of himself, that he was as one of the wild flowers of that valley, unnoticed of the multitude, but a healing to the eyes of those whose hearts are opened to him. The lilies of the wayside show forth the beauty of holiness and give praise to him

who gave them life, by manifesting his love in their growth. Men see not their use, yet they also wait upon the Lord. Thus he spake unto us and mine eyes were opened so that since that day my heart yearns in love toward every living thing, even the grass, for it also after its kind doth blossom and bring forth fruit in the love of God the Father, as the leaf of every tree draws higher up the life of God.

It matters not, Antione, whether we say that suffering opens the door to love, or to service, for they are one. He who loves greatly is that living sacrifice that above all things is acceptable to God. Love is a flame that both lights and warms, and in so doing serves. Love is born of happiness and also of suffering, and all things are born of love, even that joy that naught else can give and naught can take away.

There is a baptism of pain. I remember how that when Lazarus was dead and his sisters came out to meet us Martha came

first, and Jesus kissed her and talked with her because she was strong, and he said unto her that if one but love, though he be dead yet shall he live again. But Jesus loved Mary, and when she was come he spoke no word to her and gave her no kiss, but as they walked he went near unto her and took her by the hand and it was as if virtue passed from him to her, for he suffered with her and wept, and in that hour she was born again and baptized of tears and of the Spirit into eternal life.

It may indeed be that your time is cumbered with that which is not of love. Do not give to others of your time or of your self that which you do not in your heart greatly desire to give. If we do only those things that we love to do, our love and joy will increase with our doing. So is love a fulfilment of the purpose of the law. Even if in this way we err, we need not sorrow for these errors; they too will fulfil themselves and bear fruit of love because the seed of

them was sown in love. In my life I have made many and great errors, but there is no one of them that I repent me of, for through them I comprehend the more, and therefore serve more wisely. When you come to know of a truth, Antione, that God is in you to will and to do of his good pleasure, you know thereby that what pleases you to do is the will of God. Only unloving sacrifice is grievous. The burden of love is light and its yoke is easy and brings neither strain nor pain. The natural desire of him whose eye is single is divine. To turn away from this is not acceptable to God.

Philemon has told me of your care of the needy in their distress, and it rejoices my heart. I love thee, Antione.

JOHN.

THY dear letter, John, has shed upon my home, my lilies, all these simple things thine eyes have rested on and thy thought noted, as it were a radiant, special blessing, and has thus set them, glorified, apart from every other thing!

My love for you has set me, too, apart, as one who must give royally because of this great gift to herself—the gift of your hallowing love that I have as a crown upon my head!

When this last letter came to me from you, I laid between my breasts the roll that could not feel and I loved the mere unconscious touch of what your hand had handled. Sometimes the coming of a letter from you makes me faint. I put it in my bosom and force myself to complete whatever I am engaged upon, and all the while the blood from out my heart beats up to throat and cheek

as if clamoring for this message from thine own heart to it! Oh John, John, will you not write me indeed a love letter—one from your very heart to my heart that hungers for it?

When Ione was here I read from your letter to her, wherein you speak of being made strong through suffering, and that it is possible, despite whatever pain, yet to have joy. This is a dark saying to one of tender years and taught to believe that happiness is the favor of the gods. To such an one, sorrow must needs seem rather as a form of condemnation.

It must be as the cynics say, that our beliefs are sprung from out our sore necessities. Perhaps the mind that could not face undaunted those depths of human pain, framed, as a drug to dull his mental anguish, a philosophy built upon faith in the beneficence of pain. It would seem a gruesome faith—life but a long road of suffering

drowned in death, and beauty a thing of no avail!

Poor, sorrowful Ione! I feel almost that she must adjudge me stupid, brutal, when I would strive to comfort her, for full well do I know, as she knows, what her future holds —she may not even walk upon the street without fear of insult, nor put her foot upon the temple steps without danger of bodily injury.

It is hard to see such suffering as hers, though one may know it to be indeed the birth-pangs of a soul.

Yet when I think of your calm, strong face, dear Herald of Peace to my heart! and remember all of sorrow and of grief your life has known, I am soothed and somewhat comforted and made strong. But, apart from you, all things seem only an endless, unfathomable maze.

I am yours, always yours,

ANTIONE.

ANTIONE: Ione has been also in my heart, as you have been, in all your loving service to her. I am with you in your labors as you are with me in mine, as it were in some measure speaking also through me in the streets and in my letters to the churches. I in you and you in me, Antione, that we may be one indeed in him who is one with the Father. And the Father knows when you need a love letter, and will send you one by my hand or perhaps in that of some other messenger. Some of my love letters to you were written by the hand of Arules; to others there have been signed other names. But be assured, Antione, that all true love letters come from the same Hand, for the source of love is One.

Because we are all of one flesh, therefore while we live we must also suffer; for it is our oneness with all others that is proven to us by

one pain and that even as they, we also must feel with them to the uttermost. Had we no pain, though in a world of pain, then were we dead indeed, buried among the living.

We learn likewise by our pleasures, and it may be even more than by our pain, as do also little children. But if we will not learn in pleasure, then must we be taught through pain. Unless we become as little children, we can in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven, which is love. Little children delight in the outpouring of their love and are therefore filled with joy. They take no thought for the morrow for they know of a truth that sufficient unto the day is the good thereof. They have no care, they do not strive; the joy that is within their hearts makes itself manifest even in their dancing footsteps, and when they sleep they also smile for happiness.

We have no need to strive nor take thought in care for ourselves or for others, for even as over little children, so is love over

all our ways. The Father worketh hitherto, even before we were born into the world, and we know he would in no wise find himself without an instrument to do his will should we this day leave off from serving him.

It is Love in the stars of heaven that keep them in their courses, it is Love in the grass and lilies of the field that makes them draw drink and nourishment from the earth, that makes the crystal cleave always in accordance with its own desire, that keeps the breast warm, the eye moist. If all things created were not God, then would God weary in the ordering of them. Would it not weary you to keep your body in its own order, to take thought to make the nostrils breathe, the heart beat, the joints supply that which gives ease to their action? Yet because throughout your body is but one life, and that is your own life, all these things are thereby ordered without your thought, as are likewise all things made by the love of God, without which was not anything

made that was made. It is written "I said ye are Gods and every one of you shall be called the children of God."

In the beginning was the Word of love and the Word was made flesh. It is this love that gives life and makes our bodies warm, that makes our breasts to heave and our joints to act as is needful for their use. And where there is love there is, therefore, no need for striving or for care.

Likewise throughout all things that God hath created. The fibres of your flesh, Antione, are as the sands of the sea for multitude, yet is there any one of them that you can prick with a needle and have no knowledge of it? Likewise there is not a hair of your head, nor a weed of the field, nor a fowl of the air, that is a stranger to the love of God, and each one is guided by his love in all its ways unto the perfect fulfilment of his love for all.

As the strength flows swiftly into the raised arm of the workman, where is the

greater need for strength, though he gives no command nor does he strive and cry for this, so also unto the least of his little ones does the love of God, of its own accord and without taking of thought, bring unto those who serve what is needful for their service, unto those who love that for which the love of their souls hath need. For unto all things comes that which is their own, by the law of the outworking of the love of God, than which there is no other law. And if it seems otherwise with us, and that we do not have our own when we yet long for it and sorely desire it, then is it of a certainty that the time is not ripe, we do not yet need this thing nor would we really profit by it. For God's arm is not shortened, neither is he slack or slow to understand, and to the love of God are all desires of our hearts laid bare. That which we desire in love, doth he also desire, for it is he that loveth and worketh in us. But we know that our wisdom does not attain unto the measure of his wisdom,

therefore must we abide in his love, until we know the working of his wisdom for us and in us.

The one commandment that Jesus gave us is to love; not only to love one another, he denied that, saying, "If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? do not sinners also the same?" As you love Ione, your thought therefore devises service for her, seeking no return. And this is well because it is born of love. But you do not need therefore to be distressed lest pain come to her from others, nor strive to order all her days that they be free from pain. If in the outworking of the love of God it is ordered that pain shall come to her, then would you be working against God and not lovingly if you rob her of that gift of grief.

I am with thee, Antione, and my love is always about thee, as the mountains are round about Jerusalem.

JOHN.

JOHN! My heart is full of joy since Philip has told me that your labors in Parthia are near an end and that you then purpose to come again for a little space to those who have waited long, so long, to see your face!

I was thinking that I might even have to become miserable or hungry or in some wise greatly unfortunate to share any more in the love of him whose chief care is those for whom none other cares. It is now more than four months since any here have seen you, yet I hear from Prochorus of your constant work among the needy!

Oh, Source of all my Joy and very Breath of life to me, do you not know that I also am needy? You have taught me to need you—to want you above all else. You tarry there to feed the hungry. But am I

not likewise hungry? Come and feed me also, for my whole being is parched with thirst for you.

A.

WHEN you left me last night, John, Answerer of my every need! I was filled with a deep, quiet peace. I had given and taken—given of myself to the uttermost and taken of you to my fill. I was at rest —satisfied.

You reach the deep-hidden mother fount in me; the tears of mother-love spring in me at your gentle touch. The crowning joy of my life would be that I might have a child conceived in your embrace—that I might know the bliss of clasping your little one to my breast. There are some things in this world that are of such absolute value in themselves that no price is too great to be paid for them.

Your presence is with me still, your face bending over me—the face of a god! When I waked this morning and opened my eyes to the sky, it was into your eyes that I looked.

The thought of you is always my first thought, as it is my last thought and the burden of all my dreams!

Every hungry longing of my heart seemed to reach its zenith of realization just in the joy of your presence last night. Your touch filled me with content. But when I remembered this to-day it seemed to me that I had been selfish, in that I was willing to take of your treasure endlessly, just for the joy of the taking! But I am ambitious for you, also, and I long that the world may know your great heart as I know it, and that your epistles may be known and read throughout the world!

Poor Ione has been with me this morning. I prayed that I might say the right word to her, that I might give her in some measure of that peace that you have given to me. I took her in my arms—these arms that yours have encircled. I pressed her hand in mine and laid it against my cheek—my hand that still thrills with the touch of

your own upon it—my cheek that reddens and pales at the mere thought of you!

If she has gained succor, it is you who have succored her through me. I feel I must spend lavishly, splendidly, the riches your love has bestowed upon me. If I should even try to keep them for myself my heart would burst with its fulness!

My love for you is the gift of the gods to me! It is my great life-work just to love you, and tune my life and every life that touches mine to your measure of loving! And though I may have to pay for my height of joy with an equal depth of pain—it is worth this also—worthy any price!

A.

ANTIONE, beloved. I am moved to write to you, for to-day my soul is filled with joy. I would have your joy likewise full that our fellowship may be complete. For I am assured of a truth that joy is the natural life of man, for love is of God in whom we live, and we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love.

Ione's trouble is ours, as the pain of a hand or a foot is the pain of the whole body. We are members one of another. How can we comfort one part alone? How can we say we have the love of God in us unless we likewise trust him with those whom we love?

I trust that I shall shortly see you face to face.

JOHN.

JOHN: I have become entangled in a discussion with Heliodorus as to certain problems of good and evil. I repeated to him also somewhat that you have said to me of these matters, but I have insufficient knowledge of your doctrine.

If you do not see wickedness, but rather only error, is it that through ignorance one may, as it were, for a time fail to reach the mark set for him? Tell me then by what standard you judge what is right in our relations to men, and in action.

Heliodorus returns in the evening to continue our conversation. My slave will await your answer.

A.

ANTIONE: When we love, we desire to do yet more than the law could require of us. Hence is love the fulfilment of the purpose of the law, and also makes an end of the law.

It is better that we ask of ourselves not "Is it right?" but "Is it loving?"

JOHN.

WHY, oh why, should it be that you are not with me to-night—the last night, John, and you away in conference with your friends and I here alone and so pitifully longing for you!

I know they need your counsel. I would not send you this letter until their need of you is filled. I write to ease my own pain. O the letters and letters I write to you and never send! Xenia says I write continually. Yet I write to no one but you. O for one hour with you before you leave me alone!

ANTIONE.

THE HARVEST

EVEN as when in your letter, Antione, you cried out that I had forgotten to come to you, albeit it was the last night before my departure on my long journey, so do those who are faint-hearted fear that evil will befall them on every hand.

When I did come to you in the late watches of the night, you doubted that it was indeed I. Fear had outrun even the perceptions of love. Yet when you heard my voice, when my hand rested upon your hand, when I made myself known to you beyond peradventure, then your fear faded away and could no more return because you leaned upon my breast and needed not the assurance of any, nor that any should testify of me.

Even so, Antione, have I leaned upon the

bosom of him whom I loved, his sayings sank into my ears, his spirit entered into my spirit, the word that was made flesh became bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, and I thereby became one with him as he is one with the Father. For this reason I am assured that the Holy Spirit cometh not by doctrine but only by love.

Jesus said it must needs be that offences come, for great love is born of hardship and sore trial and even of the enmity of those we love. And they through whom offence cometh reap their own harvest of woe, even as Jesus also said and charged us that we therefore regard such an one with the greater love, in like measure with the woe that his service of offence has meted out to him.

God requireth naught of us but that we love. They who go about preaching other doctrines, and saying Lo here or Lo there is the way of salvation, do but darken the truth that Jesus the Christ lived in our midst and deny also the word of him that

sent him. These are Anti-Christ, who would lead astray if it were possible even the elect.

Antione, it is because thou art filled with love, and therefore thy whole body is filled with light, as of the sun, that I delight in my love for thee! Yet more would those who know not love delight in thy abundance, because they have the greater need. I would that thou couldst give thyself unto them even as unto me. For so shalt thou attain unto yet more abundant life.

JOHN.

I AM again depressed and full of fears to-night, dear heart. John! If only I might know for one moment the touch of your hand on my brow! I am restless and my head is hot. My way led me through that part of the city in which there is much fever when I went to-day to find poor Ione. She is ill and can not even be moved that she may be brought to my house. Ah, her love, her little hour of love, has brought to her a lifetime of suffering. And the child—I dare not even think how it may be with the child—it might be well that it should die before it is born. I read your letter to her—I have read many of your letters to her. Love comforts her, as your love calms and uplifts me now to write to you—to talk to you thus even across this distance that divides us. Help me, John; send some word of your love to me, upon this wind that

breathes upon my cheek, this wind that blows up to me from the sea where you abide. Or have you already departed to another place to preach? It is now many days since I have had any tidings from you.

ANTIONE.

ANTIONE, when I was with you by the fountain, and Pasclea's mother brought to you her little one, but a few months old, crying with pain, and you encircled him with your arms, and breathed above him words of love, and also distilled for him soothing herbs until he was at peace and slept, and smiled in his sleep, yet perchance the little one did not know of your love, but only of pain and then release from pain.

Even so we, Ione, and they that suffer by reason of fever and all who know not the fulness of love, know much pain and sometimes a happiness which is release from pain for a little time; but not until we have grown into the knowledge of such love as was revealed to us in Jesus the Christ, can we attain to that joy that takes no heed of pain. When I was with you upon the hills,

and in the darkness you trod upon a stone, yet in my arms you knew no pain, and when you returned home and there saw the blood upon your sandals and your clothing, and the deep wound in your flesh, you marvelled that you had known it not.

Even so, Antione, does the love of God, as I have seen it in the face of Jesus and as I have received it into my spirit, as it were the life of my flesh while I lay upon his breast—in like manner does love fill us and enfold us and possess our minds and souls that we know not pain save as the greater pressure of his love.

Antione, it is with this love that I love thee, and when I am also most near to thee I yearn over thee in spirit that thou mayst know it in its fulness, for this is the great gift of God, this is Emmanuel, God with us, even as was made manifest to us in the life of Jesus while he yet dwelt amongst us.

We are made in the image of God, that is in the image of love, and the whole king-

dom of heaven is within everyone of us and we show it forth to the uttermost.

It is written: "He that believeth shall not make haste," and also: "I charge you, O ye daughters, that ye awake not love until it chooses," for God is content that all things abide by the slow order of their ripening. We can till a rosebush but we can not till a rose. The blossoming of a rose is according to its own law of unfolding; so also is the way of the spirit. God, only, knoweth their hearts. Wherefore it behooveth none of us to say of such an one that he is slack, or of another, that he is evil, for in so doing we judge not such an one, but even the ways of God.

There be those who preach and give much labor to teaching and to training those who will also preach and stand fast in the faith. Yet these nevertheless fall away from the truth or rise up to darken the word of Jesus with vain teachings of philosophy. Wherefore what does any preaching profit if it

enter only into the mind of a man? For the mind of man is given to change and subject to persuasion. It is only when love possesses the spirit that a man walks in the clear light of day and needs not that any should bear witness to him.

I would that all might learn even as did Mary, who forsook all things to sit continually at the feet of Jesus, and as also did he whom Jesus set as a little child in our midst to dwell with us in our journeys, and did carry in his arms when we walked in rough places, so that he also knew, without teaching by word of mouth, the love that dwelt in him whom the Father sent, which same love the youth also showeth forth now unto those over whom he is appointed as shepherd at Antioch.

I would that all might learn even as did I also when I leaned on the bosom of Jesus, for thus only is knowledge of love perfected to the end that it can not be shaken. I would gather into my arms all who hunger

for life and thirst for love, and thus show forth to them the bounty that is in the bosom of the Father. My heart yearns over those who wither in ignorance of the love of God and of the continual refreshment of oneness with him.

Antione, thou art strong, thou hast tasted this love, but there are those who are careful and troubled about many things, and who are heavy laden and labor for that which satisfieth not. It is with such as these that I would dwell in fulness of the love of Jesus until the desert of their hearts doth blossom as a rose in the light of the Sun. I love thee, Antione, but thou dost not need my love as do those who are barren of love.

JOHN.

MY heart has been singing for joy throughout this day, John, Blessed, Beloved. I have carried the letter Timotheus brought from you close to my heart since morning and a flood of love and sweetness flowed from it through all my being.

If you were here I would kiss your eyes, your hands, your lips, in this ecstasy of tenderness that possesses me as I write! And I know that you are glad, dear one, for all your strength and quietness—perhaps even because of this calm, still, adamantine quality in your nature that draws me irresistibly like the mystery of sea-depths and the matchless beauty of mighty snow-topped hills—you are glad that I thus shower on you all the wealth of my loving, just loving you! You joy in the beautiful pearls of love I lay in your hands, you let them lie there, sweetly accepted and reverenced.

I glory in your love, for you take me as

you take all who touch your life—upward. And I love you so completely, engulfingly, I sometimes feel, in rare, high moments, in some exalted, glorified way, that I am all that you are, and that all I see in you I am. For you see in me only my oneness with you and with him whom you call the Father.

When you touch my hair caressingly and take my face between your hands and look deep into my eyes and kiss me, once and then again, yet I know it is only in an ineffable tenderness that flows from you to all living things. You accept all my loving in that gentle, affectionate way of yours that is not love, but just a perfect, tender kindness that would take the whole world close—close to your heart!

You put your arms about me with a gentle protection that brings happy tears to my eyes, for within your arms nothing but good can come near to me. Yet I know that you would give in like measure to any human creature.

When I ran so joyously into your arms that last time you were here, and covered your face with kisses, and you laughed back at me a little, for that one moment we were almost as boy and girl together!

No other gift Zeus holds in his hand is so sweet as this ecstasy throbbing and thrilling through every vein and nerve even to my soul! The essence of life and joy in just loving! Did you never know this purest happiness? Or have you forgotten it? It can not be wholly alien to you, since you can thus bring it to birth and call it out in me. I think I had not known what love could mean had I not known you. For the love of a girl is not as the love of a woman. We have a saying, "No thunders herald the gods' greatest gifts." When I went with those who had heard rumors of the strange man who healed the sick but would take no price for it, who shared his bread with the wood-gatherers and talked with them as brothers, I thought to find amusement for my dulness.

I found, withal, one who has interpreted and made fruitful my whole life!

Still art thou to me in many things a mystery, Beloved of my soul. I feel but as a little child sometimes, beneath thy calm, deep gaze. Yet is thy least affection sweeter to me than the whole love of any other man! I know now a secret of the gods and why it is they are so loath to bestow the gift of perfect love upon mankind. All other boons may be at will recalled—all grace of beauty, vigor, joy, and lastly life itself. But love once given is no longer theirs! The gods may give but can not take again this their supremest gift to us of earth!

John, thou blest of gods and men, thus hast thou blessed my life!

ANTIONE.

YOUR love rejoices me, Antione, not in that it is given to me but chiefly that it enriches your own life. Even as you lose all thought of self in your love for me, so also will you lose all knowledge of self and of separateness in fulness of love.

It is to this end that I labor with those who are yet alien to love; that the light of understanding may by some means dispel their darkness.

It is true, Antione, even as experience of life has made plain to you, that love is the essence of life and therefore in no wise under command, nor subject to the will of man. Neither can it be turned away, as it were that which had not been, when once it has sprung up within the heart. Thus it is that you say "the gods can give but may not take again."

I know that in the beginning was the tree

of knowledge of good and evil set before the eyes of men, and also the tree of life. This is to say, first the tree of discernment and of power to choose, and then the tree of decision and of eternal choice. The fruit of the tree of knowledge and discernment is action, whereby shall come experience and therefore understanding of love. If, then, having experience of love, a man with intention shall choose to know yet larger love, and is not fearful but of good courage to bear what travail the birth of this new life may perchance hold for him, then has he eaten of the tree of life, and for himself has chosen that better part which shall never be taken away from him, even the gift of eternal life which cometh through fulness of love.

It is written that God had forbidden man to eat of the tree of knowledge and of the tree of life; but this being interpreted signifies not that man should never eat thereof, but that such experience is, as it were, reserved, that a man may give pause and

consider within himself whether he indeed desires this larger experience and is able to be baptized with this baptism from above into eternal life.

He that shall eat of the tree of knowledge shall come into understanding of love through experience of life in the flesh. Knowledge without love is dead, as is also faith that is not born of love. The pool of Siloam healed him who stepped down into it only when the angel of love had stirred the waters. Faith cometh through love. Therefore did Jesus say, "Believe me for the very works' sake; believe the Word which is the Spirit shown forth in the love made manifest to men."

It was by reason of her great love for him that Mary, his mother and mine, believed even from the beginning that he was not as other men, and before he had yet done any miracle she had faith in the power of his word and said unto them that served, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." If we love,

then do we see clearly the angel that dwelleth within every man, and then do we also dwell always in the glory and radiance of love.

JOHN.

IT would have given you joy, My Dear One, to see Xenia dancing with me this moment about the fountain! You who so greatly love the light-heartedness of little children, John, and all the beauty of this radiant world, even to that of the wayside blossom, yet do you turn your back upon it all and labor ceaselessly with those who are despised and poor and have naught of joy or comeliness to give you! Can not this love that has so filled your soul be sometimes shared with those who might give somewhat of love in return, and even somewhat of comfort for thy days of toil?

Heliodorus speaks of the wretchedness of this world and of the joys of another that may be found beyond the grave. But I do not like such speaking. The religion of the Greek is that of joy. To be happy is to assure our gods that we thank them for the

past and trust them for the future. We lay our live joys on their altars; they have no pleasure in things that have died. And they give back to us again our joys, trebled. Only a sick eye sees this world as sickly. The strong, healthy soul is glad, even in buffetting and distress which are but as a bout with the gods who play their games only with those they would greatly honor.

To please the gods in drinking and eating is to make beautiful the banquet and to feast and laugh before their altars. To please the gods in labors is to do these with a gladness as of the very members of the soul; to live life hour by hour to the perfect uttermost as if indeed there were no other hour to come.

You have sometimes told me that the joy I find in simple things refreshes your weariness and that you like to be near to little children because they have no care nor any fear. And yet you spend your days among the careworn and the fearful! Ah, Beloved, why will you not leave these for a little time

and come and joy with me? I need you now! I need to know the touch of your dear hand to make complete the perfect beauty of this fair Spring day! Do you, too, feel somewhat of the joy of this season, where you toil among the far people of the hills —the song of the warm earth, the fine delight of all things growing, becoming, the pæan of the rising of the waters?

Oh, come to me, Light of my life, cool Brook in the desert of my days! that we may joy together in these simple, lovely things! On such a day as this all earth must yield one joy! The sunlight covers every living thing, as it were the great yellow robe of Athene, on her holiday. The lilies nod together and flutter in the wind like the white sails of the boats at the harbor town below. My heart itself would spread the feast were you but here, Beloved!

I sometimes feel as I did when, a very little girl, I would say, "Thank you, Apollo," on the morning of a perfect holiday. I

think throughout my life my every sense has been as a fine subtle chord on which the cadences and harmonies of all that is, make music for my soul. I joy in so slight a thing as the breath of the wind upon my skin. I love my body. It brings me such rare joys in its manifold living. O dear one, if you would but sometimes care for that splendid body the gods have likewise given to you! You should take thought for it and rest it—perhaps lie as the lions do for hours in the sun until every fibre is filled with the warmth of the gods! Surely Zeus is of all beings the most joyful. And you have told me that Jesus entered into the joy of his friends and the happiness of little children. And you, dear love, your whole being is instinct with a deep inner happiness that as it were shines out from you into the very hearts of all you touch.

Oh come to me, Life of my life, or I shall die, even in the midst of my joy, for very hunger for thee!

ANTIONE.

IF I am ever weary, Antione, it is not by reason of labor, but because I see many who thirst and hunger for the Word of life yet do so few attain to the full measure of the joy of that Word.

When I lay my head on a dear breast, or write in love to give joy to one who has called out this love, or even stand aside that the wind of adversity that is the breath of God, or the touch of pain that is but the pressure of the loving God, may reach unto those whom he would draw yet closer to himself; when I look into the eyes of them that laugh with happiness or of them that weep, I see only him who by his knowledge of all joy and all sorrow, knew also the perfectness of love.

For he taught us that the flesh doth also minister unto the spirit and it is thus that we, as it were, redeem our flesh. Not by the death of the flesh, nor mortification of

the love of the flesh, but by greater life, which cometh by greater love, are we born again into the new life which is of the Spirit. This is that breath of love that God in the beginning breathed into the nostrils of man so that he became One living Soul, and when the appointed time was come he sent his son also that we might through him know life and love and know it more abundantly.

This is the truth that shall make us free. Yet when Jesus would tell it to them that came to him from the scribes and Pharisees they imputed to him sin and said that he had a devil and was mad.

Yet is it even thus, Antione, that all men must become perfected through all experience of life to the end that we come into the knowledge of our oneness. Wherefore should we love greatly and receive unto ourselves the love of all who would give love unto us, for in like measure do we receive also him who manifested unto us the Father, who himself is love.

JOHN.

JOHN, my wonderful, all-wise friend, how I long to look into your eyes to-night, to ask counsel of your great heart, to share the illumination of your love!

You remember Heliodorus, the sculptor? He has sent his slave to ask permission to see me to-night. I am strangely moved by this word from him to-day, yet I can give no reason for the feeling that I have. It is but a few days since he was here; he stood in the court in the sunlight, tall and straight like Apollo—you know how beautiful he is, how vital, you too felt the charm of his spirit and the force of his brilliant mind. He has a great influence over me. My whole soul so loves what is beautiful

Heliodorus understands women as few men do. His simplest courtesies are as from courtier to a queen; his reverence makes one regal. Even as I sat beside you the

evening he was here I felt the compelling influence of his glorious vitality, the power of his vigorous beauty, and he knows always in some subtle way how to bring to fine expression the best that is in my mind.

Beloved! It is now almost dawn. Heliodorus has but just left me. My heart turns to you as to one who can interpret all things and who can never misunderstand. For I doubt that I at all times understand myself. And for this last night I know no interpretation.

When Heliodorus came to me I was transcribing some lines of Aristophanes for a friend—"For my part, I now affirm in reference to all human beings, both men and women, that our race would become happy if we were able to carry out our love perfectly, and each one were to obtain his own special beloved, thus returning to his original nature." Heliodorus glanced over my writing, and we talked a little of that belief that

the gods cleave in two every soul they fashion and with closed eyes cast to the wild earthwinds of circumstance these halves charged with prenatal burning desire each for the other. We talked of our unplumbed human instincts that give rise to our many faiths, of the limitations of circumstance, of art in life.

Our conversation grew more personal, more intimate. We had gone out into the court and the moonlight was filtering softly through the oleandars above us. Heliodorus' hand touched mine—it seemed so natural that my own should rest there in his. He told me how he had loved me all these years, how he had followed the course of my life with increasing pride in my strength and courage, and that now he was at last free to ask me for his wife. He was so splendid, dear, as he stood before me there in the softened light, I—loved him!

All these years he has strewn my way with flowers. In my loneliness, long before I

knew you, it was he who comforted me and in the greater loneliness of your long absences you know that he has been my constant friend, tireless in his effort to make me happy.

As he talked of his love, his voice low with emotion, as he pictured the joy of perfect union, the ineffable sweetness of love, I felt that I fell in love anew with—Love! That is the way with us women, we love Love. For a woman does not fall in love with a man, but with the Love he idealizes for her.

And as I looked into that noble face so close to my own, that moment my nature answered the cry of his nature to me. I wanted to lose myself in that wealth of his emotion; I found myself, as it were, in him; I saw in his love, my love for you expressing itself. I saw you in him and myself in you and him in me!

And I was to him as I would be to you. And in that hour I felt nearer to all that is beautiful and sacred in the world.

If you were here with me now, Beloved, I could look into your eyes and say that there has been naught of evil done to you or to myself.

I am laying bare my soul before you now, dear one, to give you, while yet the radiance of love is in my heart, the fragrance of that wondrous hour which still enfolds me.

You are so close to me now, my perfect one—so doubly, trebly dear! I lay my hands in yours, I look into your eyes—never have I known the Dear Presence more near my heart! I know that you understand—from this baptism of love with Heliodorus to-night I come again to you, dear one, and you welcome me into your arms.

I have been sitting in the court in the rare, perfect, pearly light of coming day. I questioned myself as to why it is that I can not bring myself to live with Heliodorus as his wife, since he loves me enough thus to forfeit his citizenship for me. I accept his love

gladly, and my love goes out to him in return. Yet I can not find in my heart the desire to take that step that would lay under my heart another life—that would again fill my arms with the ineffable sweetness of motherhood. . . . It must be in this, I think, that the secret of my whole womanhood lies. . . .

Many men have loved me, dear. And because I and all women are in love with Love my heart has answered many times, as I have already told you. I would take gladly of the flood of love that has poured into my life, and would become, myself, a part of it. Yet always there seemed something closer to me than myself that made me hesitate. Do you know what I mean? Ah, Beloved, I know by the tenderness in your eyes that you understand! And this makes it easier for me to tell you now what it has always before seemed impossible that words should hold. . . .

When each dear friend learned to love me,

with a closer and sweeter love than friendship knows, and I was ready in my heart to receive the glorious gift of love, this Something has become more vital and has wrapped me about, taken possession of me. I caught as it were a glimpse of a new spirit reaching out to me from the land of unborn souls. . . . And in the very flower and consummation of my love I have hesitated. . . . As I looked in the eyes of one close friend . . . one lover . . . after another, I have questioned my soul. . . . "Would you have your little one like him?" Then, dear, there was no doubt about the answer.

And even so all through the years of my womanhood, Beloved, have two invisible, tiny hands kept me loving, in the midst of whatever bitter experience, till at last the little unborn, unseen being reached out its sweet, small hands . . . to you, and wanted to express a body and a soul and a life like

yours! It was then that I knew that I was free to love you with my whole being, that between us a divine life could come into expression, a little new life like my beloved Xenia and like you could bud and blossom perfectly because of our own perfect joy together.

It is to you that I belong, Giver and Nurturer of the breath of the gods within me —not to Heliodorus nor any other man in all the world. But I know, even in the hour of my supremest joy with you I know, that you can never in like measure belong to me. And yet in the blackest moment of that loneliness with which such knowledge sometimes sears my heart, even so am I happier as but the least among thy friends, than enthroned above all women in the love of other men.

Oh, John, thou for whom my heart cries out thus ceaselessly! What is it in but the light of thine eyes that in this wise dims every

other radiance for me? Or is it the strange light in thy soul? I do not know. I only know thou art not as any other man and that I love thee, love thee!

A.

MY dear one: There is a union of the body and there is likewise a union of the heart and mind. Also there is a deep communion of the soul, which hath been ours, Antione, and will be yet again and in greater measure.

JOHN.

IT is now nearly five months since I have seen thy face, John, for whom I continually long! Though the daily joy of living can not be wholly dimmed, yet have there been hours when the world seemed empty and bereft and my need of you was such that I could only cast myself upon my couch and weep—an agony of tears! Even Xenia could not comfort me. In my sleep I would still sob for you, just for the touch of your dear, strong hands!

O it must be that when I reach out to you, long for you, you respond in like measure! It must be then that you are really here by my side, with your arms about me, when I thus so hunger for your arms! Do you not feel my presence, the thrill of my hands, as I caress your hair? I kiss your forehead, your eyes, those wonderful eyes, so full of fire and of love, so keen with the power that

speaks through them, so tender with the thoughts that are too deep for words! I draw your dear head down until it rests upon my bosom. My hands touch softly the strong chin and find their way to the broad shoulders, the virile, unbowed neck, the dear, protecting arms! I feel the wonderful heart-beats that I know are singing in tune with my own, O Beloved! Do you not feel the flow of tenderness for you in my very finger-tips as they reach out to you? The same dear feeling is throbbing throughout my blood, is radiant from my whole body, you-ward!

Do you remember when you came to me, to my summer home in the hills? We stood on the shore and watched the sun as it sank behind the mountain and cast long bars of quivering shadows across the darkening water at our feet? Your nearness had attuned me afresh to the beauty about me; the humming of the insects in the busy work of their tiny lives was like soft music, the

nestward fluttering of the birds above us in the olives, the fragrance of dew-filled flowers, the sounds of toiling men, softened by distance down the valley—all blended in a perfect harmony to which my whole being rhythmed. The mountains towered beyond us on the farther shore and you told me of the psalms you used to sing on the yearly pilgrimages. I loved that one—"As the Mountains are Round about Jerusalem." I loved to hear you talk of that first time you saw Jerusalem, when you were a child of ten or twelve, and how wonderful it looked to you after the long journey over the mountains and through the valleys of the Jordan. I am glad you have had friends among the Greeks all your life. I am sure that because of that I seemed less a stranger to you from the first.

I loved to hear you talk of the synagogue school where you went as a little boy—you can not know, I think, how I dwell on these pictures of your childhood—and where

Caiaphas used to talk to you and keep you with him so long that your teachers feared you would fall short in your studies! They must have loved you, too—perhaps they were somewhat jealous of Caiaphas. I loved to have you talk to me of your mother, and of all that passed in your father's house on the quiet bay, sheltered by the hills above, where you used to sing—"I will lift up mine Eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." Always the sight of the hills seems to take you back to those dear days of your childhood and I love to hear you talk of them.

I was very happy that evening. It seemed as if some great spirit of love enveloped me as I lay beside you on the grass. I am sure that "the Father" you talk to me about was joying in our joy there under the stars, was moved in himself by this love he had given us, and that he understood. You and I and the Father—we three together. . . .

It is now late and I am alone. I have dismissed Xanthus, who seemed stupid and selfish to-night. Many men are thus stupid in their attitude toward women, trying to influence them through their senses rather than their imagination, their inspirations. Yet Xanthus is kind. He would do any service for me in a time of trouble and he has been so good to poor Ione. For this reason I tried to be patient with him and I repeated to myself that when he had at last gone I would reward myself for my patience by writing a little more to you—as one promises sweetmeats to a child after medicine!

I have been thinking of that last night before you left, when I pleaded so to travel with you in your work. As you stood there, looking down into my eyes, I hardly dared to breathe, for I knew you were weighing every reason and holding your dear heart in rein. Your thought of me shone in your eyes, but you were thinking also, and chiefly, of your work—the work that Jesus had given

you to do, and even when you knew at last what your answer must be I could see that it was hard for you to tell me, fearing it would wound me.

When you took my face between your hands and kissed me I knew that you had to deny me! I understood, and did not misunderstand. I knew that I would have been a hindrance to you. It would indeed have been impossible to take a woman with you on your hurried journeys. But oh, my Love, these terrible absences, these long, long months without you. How much longer will it yet be before I again see you!

IT is well to want some things deeply, Antione, my dear one, for then do we in some measure sound the love of God toward us.

It is when we yearn in hunger of heart that Love doth in some wise most richly reveal itself unto us. You believe, Antione, that you hunger for my presence. But it is for the fulness of love that you yearn, even for the love of All that Is. It is by reason of the fulness of love that we have known in one another, Antione, that you thus hunger for that perfect love which is everlasting life. There is no other life, neither is there any joy nor any salvation, save as we grow into the fulness of Love.

JOHN.

I MUST write you, John, of how I felt at the Agape yesterday, with your eyes upon me! Yet am I glad that I was there.

For a long time afterward I was convinced that I could never tell you of it. But when I had slept, with the new morning came the clearer light and I knew then that I must tell you everything before I could know again the closest touch of the Dear Presence about me.

You have talked so much to me of Mary. I think you can not know quite how often you have spoken of her to me—of the work she is doing, the friends she has gathered about her, the beauty of her life. You pointed her out to me as we entered yesterday, then you left me and went to her and talked with her. There was something in your way of speaking, something in your face as you bent above her, that held my attention. Then, like a flash—I knew!

The hot tears blinded my eyes. My lips were parched, my own breath choked me. My soul cried out in agony to the gods—"I have lost him, lost him!" I seemed to live years before a voice said:

"Let us pray."

And because those about me did so, I fell on my knees—and prayed and prayed in a half wild, heart-broken way, until at length through the chaos of my emotion a voice sounded in the stillness of that great room: "Wherefore I say unto you, love."

I threw back my head in angry, impotent misery, and your eyes caught mine and held them with that unwavering, penetrating look that seems always to touch the very core of my being in loving understanding. Your wonderful eyes, Beloved! The power of their gentleness, the sweetness of their sympathy! They spoke to me and I knew that you understood. You fathomed my agony as your eyes still held mine and while I knelt there among the friends before you,

and reached out to you in my sore need, there was no censure in your look, no pity to humble me—only love! Till at length the storm of terrible suffering was passed and the remembrance of your truth and strength and unwavering love seemed to fill me with a purer peace than I had ever known.

The people rose from their knees and Mary turned and laid her hand on your arm and looked into your face. And when she spoke your face broke into a smile of understanding sympathy, and I saw again your eyes, illumined now with loving friendship for her. Her face was very sweet and pure and gentle, as I saw it upturned to yours. Your transforming love seemed to make her beautiful—must needs indeed have made her in some measure like you!

Your face and hers were before my eyes throughout the night. I suffered, John. You know that I suffered. Yet has my love triumphed—your love, the love that you waked in me. I love you so, dear one, that

I am willing—I am glad that a woman has been able to create in you that sweetness and tenderness of joy in just loving! Even in my pain of loneliness and heart hungriness to-day, still am I glad—for you, that you have indeed known that uttermost sweet tenderness that it is, simply to love! Just to love, love, love!

Your friend Jesus, who knew all suffering, would not wish me not to love you, but to love you only with a love that leaves you always free. I am beginning to understand something of your devotion to your crucified teacher and your zeal for the work he laid upon you—you have helped me to understand through your own love which his great love had waked. It is your happiness and it shall be mine also, that you live—and even die, if need be!—in that loving kinship of work that I saw among those at the Agape, with friends dear to you by reason of a thousand precious memories of those three years together of which you speak so often.

If you feel it best for this work that is so close to your heart, stay here, dear love and do not come to Athens! I would not hinder you. I think it would hurt me more to feel that I was a burden to you than to bear again the loneliness and hunger of those long, long absences. I love you more than life—love you so utterly that I can do what is more cruel and terrible than death to me—I can let you go! I dread—oh how I dread, dear heart—those bleak, barren, endless days without you! Yet I would not keep you to your hurt. . . .

Forgive me. I mean to be so strong, dearest, so brave to endure—as you would have me. . . .

I was writing when I heard your step, dear love, and I hid this letter.

I hold now in my heart how you came to my house after the conference was over, and I drew my fingers softly through your hair and about your forehead and kissed your

dear eyes, closed, as you lay on the couch, resting. For you were tired though you would not speak of it, and I could see that I soothed you and that made me glad.

There was no word of the day's experience between us. There was no need of words.

I return to-morrow and will leave this letter for you, so that you may decide in my absence whether it is best for your work that we should separate.

Oh John, my beloved! My whole being reaches out to you! How can I let you go!

It was with this thought that I clung to you at parting. Was it, dear love, was it indeed for the last time? . . .

John, my Beloved, Messenger of peace, Mountain of the gods that is forever crowned with light! While I tarried here in sadness, and the thought of what might be your answer to my letter concerning Mary and the Agape stalked before my eyes like a spectre, even then were you journeying

hither to comfort me, and my sorrow was forgotten and drowned in joy at the sound of your step upon the stones! At your touch all my fear vanished; enfolded in your arms the path before me seemed again lighted by the sun. Is it indeed that we women, as also our own little ones, learn only from the loving arms about us?

Ah, dear one, the perfect joy of those hours of communion with you! There was no thought hid from you. You sounded the depths. Freely as I reveal myself to you when I write, yet are there innermost things that, as you know full well, can be drawn from me only by your lips. Your body is as a living shrine for me.

When I am with thee thus, bathed in thy love, filled with thy presence, I love as widely as dost thou, and none escape the largess of my love! I could not grudge to any soul a share in such deep joy as then is mine! But when thou art far from me, O Sun of all my

days, then is it that in my hunger for thee I would be even niggardly with thee, I would give no crumb of thee to any!

O come to me again, thou Ocean of delight, and fill me with that perfect peace with which thou art so filled!

Three hours last night, and I craved the whole night long! It was as if I had begged of you a bright gold piece, O Master among men, and you put me off with copper! Yet was even that so precious to me, Giver of endless joy! that as I held it in my breast throughout the night and till the morning came, it seemed to me to be indeed a shining thing and even as gold itself!

You have created in me that which seeks its maker ceaselessly! You who are indeed a physician of the Soul, tell me how I may still this continual heartache and hunger and longing for your presence!

My love for you is as it were the gods themselves within me exulting in their

power! Is it indeed as you have told me, that loving is and must ever be its own fulfilment?

Xenia would have me say to thee that she is lonely without her "dear comrade."

ANTIONE.

LOVE is its own fulfilment, Antione, and the fulfilment of all things. And Love is the only physician of the Soul.

Of Xenia I delight to hear. She also is my own child, though not after the flesh. Every child that is born of love is likewise the child of my love and of your love, Antione. And every birth is like the glory of creation whereof Jesus spake when he said, "Ye must be born again." And thus it is even as he also said: "I will come again, not in one woman but by all women."

Mary, his mother whom he gave unto me to be also my mother, went, even until she could no longer journey, on pilgrimages to Bethlehem; as she had been wont aforetime, according to the custom of our people, to go up to Jerusalem.

For those who go to worship at Jerusalem the city is made holy because of the temple

that is builded therein. Even so for Mary was Bethlehem made holy because it was there that the temple of his body was made manifest unto her. For in every child the mother is born again after the flesh, so also in her love for the child is she born again into everlasting life. For every child born of love is as it were a fragment of the eternal life that comes through love.

I love thee, Antione.

JOHN.

THIS morning Xenia seemed somewhat listless, and in searching for a simple herb to give her I mistook for the one I wanted another that was a deadly poison, and not until I had crushed and moistened it did I see my error. In another moment I would have put it to her lips!

The mixture fell from my hands and I sank upon the stones of the court crying, "Oh, John, John!" Xenia bent over me and I told her what I had done. Even the sound of your name had calmed me somewhat and she comforted me and bade me laugh, even as she did, also, that no harm had been done to her. My precious little one! Had any evil come to her through me I could not bear another day of life! I tremble as I write.

I am depressed to-day. I suffer through all the joy of loving you because you are so

far away and in such constant danger. Timotheus told me you were white and weary when he saw you, and I hear now a rumor that you have gone out alone into the great forest to seek out the bands of robbers and wild hill people. Oh, my Beloved, if any harm should come to you my heart would break! The mere thought of it makes me faint! For myself I have courage, I am strong—but for you . . .

Dear, I broke down, I could not see to write, for weeping—my longing for you, my fears for your safety.

O treasure of my heart! you are needed of the world, and in this and in other lands there are great minds to whom your message must be given, men who would know your worth—why do you spend yourself upon those barbarians! Philip, too, grieves that you will be thus rash. O forget not how many here long for you and count even a word from you as precious!

I have read your letter to the churches, John; it moved me greatly that you should have so taken thought that I might share it, even as did your friends in the work. I kept it by me for another day and read it yet again. And much that I read sank into my heart and thus likewise deep into my understanding. Yet always I comprehend the more clearly what I hear from thine own lips. It is then as if thy heart spoke even to my heart without need of words.

ANTIONE.

ANTIONE, Anna has been grieved because of my friendship for you and the letters I have written to you. I have told her, as you knew that I would, all that she has asked of me. She fears confusion and entanglement in the future, and she is pained that I should ask your help in any part of my work. She is sore at heart because of the thought that her own help has not been sufficient for me.

I have comforted her somewhat, for she is but as a little sister who must be borne in arms over the rough places, but my own heart is heavy that it is no longer possible for you to go with me on the voyage. I must therefore again travel alone without the comfort and inspiration that your help has been to me. I am grieved for this, for I have leaned upon you, Antione, and have taken joy and rest in your love.

Yet is Anna near to my heart by reason of her presence with me all these years, and more so in that she is not yet strong and of courage as art thou, dear one! Neither has she learned that love that takes no heed of self. Therefore am I tender with her that she may come into the knowledge of such love, and having told her of my great love for thee, yet do I regard her weakness as does the husbandman the new leaf upon the bursting seed, rather than the branches of some great full-grown tree.

Yet am I grieved, Antione, for thou are dear to me. I can not write a long letter to thee now, but I will see thee yet once again before I set sail.

JOHN.

I HAVE held so long the thought of Anna as one with you and like you—as it seems impossible that she should not be, living daily in the light and warmth of your presence as she does, John, my dear one, in whom my soul delights! It is hard for me to comprehend that she can grudge me this least share of you that has been mine! You have been with me so little! Out of all the time I have known you so few days—hours—have been given wholly to me! I have gone with others to hear you preach, I have been with you in public places, but oh so pitifully few have been those times when you have been wholly mine—so few, so far between, and short!

And must even these be taken from me? John, how can she be so hard! If she could only know how I need you, the pain of aching loneliness without you! She could

not then be selfish with you! I have learned to love Mary—she is so gentle and so full of love I could not help loving her! I could love Anna also if she would but let me. Why will she not let me, John? I have rejoiced in your happiness together, I have honored her in my heart as though your nearness to her made for her a crown, I have blessed her for the blessing she could bring to your life. Why can she not also be glad because of the little I might do to make smooth the rough way you must tread? Why can she not spare me, out of the fulness of her long years with you, enough to stay a little this terrible hunger for you? I would be satisfied with even crumbs! I am not jealous, dear; I am only—starved!

But I would not cause Anna any pain—that would but add to the burdens that you carry. If you should even leave the decision with me, still I think I could not find any willingness to do aught that would bring her suffering. And oh, Beloved, I would make

any sacrifice rather than bring suffering to you!

I have probed deeper in the days that have passed since your letter came to me. Deeper than the pain, deeper than any pain that could come to me, life of my life, creator of all that I am! Deeper than all else is this great love you have waked within me!

ANTIONE.

ANTIONE, my heart! Jesus knew also the uttermost of anguish, until his soul cried out, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."

Yet, had it passed, we had not known the fulness of love, and the word that he made manifest unto us had come short of its fulfilment, for he said: "When I am lifted up with love I will draw all men unto me."

As we likewise know sorrow and pain our love shall also work the will of him that sent us, for God doth not suffer the travail of any soul in vain.

Antione, my love, I suffer with thee.

JOHN.

I HAD counted the cost of the truth that I spoke when I said that there is no sacrifice I would not make for you, John, my beloved. There is nothing in all the world that I desire as I desire your joy. I find my joy only in your own. You may ask of me all things, all things.

I do not yet comprehend the full import of your letter, but there is a weight in my breast, a dull ache like a dead thing bound there. Yet it is needful that you should tell me plainly and fully what you would have me do. It will be my joy to follow your wish to the uttermost. I have courage, I am strong. And I will understand. I am assured that you know already that I will indeed understand whatever your love would ask of me.

ANTIONE.

ANTIONE! God does not give often, nor to many, such love as thine!

Alone in the dark through all last night thou wert in my thoughts. Thou wert with me. And now I write to thee as seems most loving, for there is no other good but love.

I am with thee always and in my love for thee there is no variableness.

JOHN.

Yes—not to see, neither to write to each other—that is what I must needs say unto thee now.

My heart is torn that I must give thee, also, pain.

DEARER than life to me! Must it indeed be that I may not even write to you! Nor will you write again to me! My foreboding had been that you would write that we must not again see each other. But oh, my Beloved, not even to have word of you, some message from you!

It is terrible, cruel—yet even in the blind agony of my pain I see the beauty of that strength and vision that has made it possible for you to strike such a blow. Because of this I can never doubt your love for me.

It shall be as you say—and yet—it will not be true that I do not see you. I shall see you always, always. I think it may be now that the Dear Presence will never leave me.

And when you think of me, I shall be there with you—waiting beside you. And so I shall be happy.

I have kept this letter by me for more than a day. I have an increasing premonition of some evil befalling my little one. John, my more than friend, I know you will never forget that night we talked together of Xenia's future—and of another, doubly dear to us, yet whom we do not know. I hold in my heart the love you then showed me in your own heart toward Xenia. It comforts me unspeakably that if the gods will that I be taken away, she will be then as your own, one of the little children of our love. I will be happy in the thought that you, her "dear comrade," will be her constant friend and teacher, and I pray Zeus that she may learn from you of that great love wherewith you have brought blessing to me.

ANTIONE.

WHY, oh why, my dear, dear comrade, if miracles are true, why could you not have come before it is too late! Mother is dead!

She had been to a meeting of the Agape, and on her way home was taken by the soldiers and brought before the magistrate. He asked her if she were one of the sect called Christians. She answered, No. Then he asked her if she had been at their meetings. She refused to answer, so they took her away to prison.

Through Marcus, the guard, who is secretly a Christian, I was allowed to see her. I begged and besought her to say that she was not at their meetings, but she refused and refused, through all my pleadings, to speak anything but the truth.

Then I wept. I strove so hard, oh, so hard, not to weep at parting with her. She was trying to be so brave!

The next day she was taken again before the magistrate, yet she still refused to answer as they bid. Then they scourged her with whips until strips of flesh fell from her back and she was covered with blood. I covered my eyes and wept until I could not see for weeping.

Again they questioned her, and she acknowledged that she had been to the Agape, but she denied that she was a disciple of the Christians. Then the magistrate said, "Give me the names of those who were with you there," but she refused, saying: "I love the followers of Jesus."

Then I was brought before the magistrate and they forced my mother to stand near me while they beat me cruelly before her eyes. I could hear her dear voice between the blows—"Be brave, Xenia, my darling," she cried. "Be strong. Remember your comrade!"

They stopped beating me, and for a moment there was silence in the hall. I saw

my mother reach out her arms as if to greet some one, though there was no one near her. Then—she fell! O my mother! The sun is blotted out from the sky over all the earth!

I fly to-night to Africa with Heliodorus and Ione, and Euneo who will bring you this. You will come to me even there, as you promised?

But why, oh why, my beloved comrade, if miracles are indeed true, why did you not help me before it was too late!

XENIA.

XENIA, my comrade, my little one! Thy mother did not bear witness by her words that she was with us, yet the deeds that sprang from the love of her heart bore witness, and she is with us now indeed.

The Spirit of thy mother is about thee, Xenia, and will always be near to thee and to me, even nearer than in life, for it is the same spirit that is in thee.

Euneo will tell thee all—I can write but little, so that she may hide it in her clothing. The soldiers are seeking me. But my time is not yet and I will yet come to thee, beloved child, and we will comfort each other and talk together of the joy of thy mother's life, which is also thy life, for it is because of thy mother's great love that thou also art one of us. For greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for those who are only his friends.

JOHN.

244.2
H14
Hall, B.
The love letters of
St.
244.2
H14